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AN ADVENTURE IN INDEPENDENCE

by George A. Benson

The Ninth Ohio District, in which is situated the industrial city of Toledo, will be represented in the Eighty-second Congress by Mr. Frazier Reams, who will be the only Independent in that sublime assembly. This is the distinction he won by setting aside the incumbent Democrat, the Honorable representative of the CIO, Thomas Burke, and Homer Ramey, a Republican who won great renown in a couple of antecedent Congresses as a Vote. But there were other distinctions, for Reams' victory has more than electoral and local significance.

Despite a brilliant campaign, during which he came to grips intelligently with the issues, Mr. Reams was given no better than one chance in a hundred by the soothsayers. According to these, Mr. Reams, a Democrat, would breach the political law of supply and demand by taking more votes from the Republican than from the official Democrat, thereby assuring Mr. Burke's election.

Thus, many thought they saw a plot on the part of the regular Democratic organization, some disgruntled Republicans and Mr. Reams to keep Burke in his fat job. Then, they said, Richard Gosser, a vice-president of the CIO and the overlord of Local 12, United Automobile Workers, would deliver his entire membership and their accumulated votes to Burke. On the other hand, Mr. Ramey, possessing the vast popularity of an ebullient Boanerges, would have enough support to bury Mr. Reams behind an Ottawa county barn.

Well, the soothsayers were wrong, as they often are; indeed, as most of them were, up and down the Republic, just before the national plebiscite. Reams won, handsomely. Ramey is the one who was buried in third place. Burke was fetched for a sound and salient reason: he was the representative, not of the Ninth District, but of the UAW and the CIO. Even the CIO's national paper called him the only "representative of the six million CIO members" in Congress. He was beaten, too, because the eminent Gosser couldn't deliver the whole union vote.

II

Now, I know that it is easy to make false assumptions. Also, that once made, they do great mischief. I am sure, however, that there is competence in my premise, to wit: the voters of Lucas and Ottawa coun-

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ties, comprising the Ninth District, had come upon the truth that they were being victimized by the promoters of the Handout State, by an Administration which had sold out to the two largest pressure groups in the nation -- labor and the husbandmen -- and by a CIO official who wanted to subsume the whole industrial area.

It was clear, too, that they reached a definitive conclusion in another matter, namely, that the Administration's follies, idiocies, and mistakes in foreign policy have got us into a war which may be a prelude to World War III. The candidates did not make much of foreign policy, but the issue was kept before the voters by other agents.

In other words, there was a revolt in the district against the paternalistic State and the absolutism that accompanies it: a revolt against a pressure-group domination which Mr. Truman has helped erect. Very early in the campaign, Mr. Reams designated "Gosserism" as a major issue, and he hammered at it all through the campaign, pointing the boney index finger of scorn at Burke as a "Gosserman", not a Congressman. He fought Burke on public debt, deficit financing, taxes, inflation, the consequences of a socialistic program -- all things about which Burke knew nothing. Ramey revealed that he knew very little more than Burke.

Burke tricked himself out as a paladin of the common man, beholden to no one. Ramey just hollered. Burke couldn't get away from Gosser and the things he stands for. Ramey couldn't get away from himself. Both were swallowed by the revolt.

Mr. Reams was the symbol of that revolt. Indeed, he was the instrument. I am convinced that he will remain an Independent, with a big I. He was the leader of the revolt in the Ninth District, and the spirit of that leadership will remain with him in Washington.

III

The Ninth District election was cut, on a small scale, from the pattern of the Ohio Senatorial election. It was a bitter fight against the labor forces, just as Taft's was. Labor made it a campaign of hate, and Gosser's Local 12, UAW, put everything it had into the fight to defeat Reams. It didn't bother about Ramey. It charged that newspaper and industrial interests induced Reams to become an independent candidate, long after the primaries, to serve them and the princes of pelf. Reams violated the two-party system, it said, by becoming an Independent after failing to run in the primaries. He was a man whose mind had been suborned by enemies of labor. It spent prodigious sums, and waged an unremitting propaganda war of lies, misstatements, and distortions.

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Why was Gosser the issue? Simply because of a persistent, ruthless, tyrannical drive he has made to fasten his union upon Toledo's widespread industry with controls that would enable him to dictate terms, conditions, rules and regulations to management at will.

He has great power now, but months ago he launched a campaign to increase it inordinately. After Reuther had won wage advances and an opulent pension and welfare fund scheme out of the automobile industry, Gosser, international vice-president of the CIO, popped up suddenly with an area-wide pension scheme of his own: a scheme which every manufacturer was to adopt without question; a scheme to cover every UAW-CIO member in the area, no matter what dissimiliarity existed among the plants in the way of wages, conditions of employment, method and type of production, etc. Moreover, each employer was expected to put up $100 for each employee just to start the thing off with an ample chest.

Gosser threatened to close every plant in Toledo if he didn't get his way. The strike weapon was used without judgment when he thought it was time to crack down. He got some takers for his scheme, though in a modified way, but he caused plenty of trouble. Manufacturers organized a "Committee-to-Save-Toledo-Payrolls".

Some weeks before election, Gosser came out with an area-wide plan for small businesses, and that's when the political revolt began to shape up. It was a costly scheme, sure to work great hardships on small businesses; indeed, to make it impossible for some to continue. When he pounced upon the small plants, he did so with a "take-it-or-else" pronouncement. If management resisted, its plant was struck. One company, finding itself struck without warning, shut up shop after more than 50 years operation in Toledo and prepared to move elsewhere.

IV

In a way, then, the revolt could be described as purely local, without interest to the nation as a whole. It would be a mistake to look upon it as such, for it was and is part of a national uprising which the election mounted. The local situation is hooked into the nation's, one of the consequences of Truman's debt to organized labor: to be more accurate, one of the consequences of the evils that stem from the Wagner Act, to which some of organized labor wants to return. That was an issue in the Toledo area -- that and the Taft-Hartley Act and the Administration's program of Statism, which the CIO supports.

Observation in the Ohio area, particularly the northwest corner, long since convinced me that the people had begun to grow restless under the gross fraud which two Administrations have committed upon them.

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Labor unions for some years have enjoyed a special position in America, for under the Wagner Act they were given rights and powers denied other groups. The NLRB, and the courts, enlarged the privileges and powers. This position obtains to a considerable extent today, despite the Taft-Hartley Act, for some powerful labor organizations have been made an economic and political partner of the Administration.

This is what the voters of Ohio opposed this year, both in the Senatorial and the Ninth District Congressional contests. Labor and the President, it was proved, had misprized the public, long since grown tired of having its credulity debauched. The revolt does not mean that the people would destroy the right to strike. But there are other rights -- they feel -- and labor must respect them. After all, the blessings of the Constitution are ecumenical, and it is time the Administration and political leaders were clear in their minds about that.

All this was coupled, in the minds of the public, with Statism, with the New and Fair Deals' conception of Absolutism. The people saw, for example, that what the soi disant liberals, the gaudy reformers were aiming at, as Albert J. Nock put it a long time ago, was not "reducing the State's power to distribute economic advantage; on the contrary, every one of their principal measures tended to increase it".

Finally, the victory of Reams is not only an adventure in independence, but also a warning to the Republicans. The duty of an opposition is to oppose, vigorously and fearlessly. If it fails to do so, there will arise a "third force".

That is the meaning of this election, at least as it was recorded in Ohio. Mr. Reams knows that, and that is why he will remain an Independent -- an Independent out of the Democratic party, which he served well on many occasions. His independence means an obvious course somewhere between the Democratic and Republican parties. The former is a captive of Labor. At least it was until November 7. In Toledo the Republicans silently and sullenly looked upon the Democratic-Gosser union, but refused to combat it. Reams will stand with Byrd and Douglas on fiscal matters, with Mr. Taft on foreign policy, as well as other matters. But he will keep himself free to act as his judgment dictates.

George A. Benson is Editor of the editorial page of the Toledo Times.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VII, No. 48

By Frank C. Hanighen November 29, 1950

DISASTER: THE RESPONSIBILITY: Out of the horror and bewilderment over the debacle in North Korea, one conclusion should emerge clearly. The responsibility lies squarely on the politicos and diplomats. Despite the efforts of Fair Dealers to put the blame on MacArthur, the picture is crystal clear that the Far East Commander pursued an absolutely correct course -- which was imposed on him by the politicians and diplomats. The United Nations Assembly by a big majority vote on October 7 gave him orders to cross the 38th Parallel into North Korea and to restore that area to UN control. (And he was not allowed to bomb the Communist lines of communication in Manchuria.) The New York Times today in a well-documented editorial "The 38th Parallel" shows that all risks involved in such an order were weighed and the decision made with the knowledge that it might invite invasion by the Chinese Communists; and that Britain, France and other nations now expressing shrill regrets and criticism of MacArthur, voted with the majority in favor of the resolution. The military results of this decision are now before the American public.

What stirs some military observers more profoundly than anything else are the ominous implications of the debacle. If, as is evident in Asia, Stalin can call the time, place, terrain and mass character of the war, what may be the results if he chooses to call our bluff on the continent of Europe? What price MAP then? The few paltry divisions on the continent now, or (if we had them) even the 50 divisions which we hope to have there -- would they prove as insufficient as the United Nations army in Korea before a mass onslaught? It is indeed, as Senator Taft argues, a time for re-examination.

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ACHESON: Retirement of Dean Acheson as Secretary of State was expected, by hour and minute, among certain top leaders of House and Senate -- as the lame duck session got under way. Talk of a successor centered on Vinson -- and, surprisingly, of a new dark horse, Paul Hoffman, former head of ECA. It is rumored that there have been some very recent conversations between the President and Mr. Hoffman. But, everyone winds up such discussion with the remark, "Mr. Truman is unpredictable in his cabinet appointments".

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WAR INVESTIGATION: Investigation of the Korean war effort, including sufficiency of men, equipment, armament and conduct, by a special Joint Committee of the House and the Senate is more and more a probability in the new Congress, although no public declarations have been made. The matter is under private discussion among some top flight leaders in both branches. To some extent it would probably resemble a similar inquiry of the Pearl Harbor disaster after World War II. White House leaders are fully aware of the discussions going on, and can be expected to oppose the project. How broad such an investigation would be, and how far it would go, is as yet a matter of speculation.

In addition, there is the probability of a re-examination of foreign policy as called for by Senator Taft; this also would be confronted with the opposition of the Administration. The two inquiries would be entirely distinct, although at times they might touch or overlap. In the past two days there is a sharply rising dismay over the events in Korea. The matter is being brought to a razor edge by parents and homefolks, writing to their Representatives and Senators, or talking

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with them while at home, with the feeling growing that after the dazzling performance of American armies in Europe and in the Pacific in World War II, there has been something radically wrong in dealing with the Korean problem.

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LITTLE STEEL FORMULA AGAIN: Legislative objectives in the next Congress of CIO and AFofL are being largely abandoned, with attention turned to administrative actions under economic controls. A new formula for wage controls, if and when price controls start, is under consideration by the National Production Board and Mr. Symington. As it now takes shape, it will not be a tight freeze, and will allow for further increases for unions which have not yet had their rearmament wage boosts. The new increases will be geared to about 10 cents an hour, although CIO's Murray seeks 16 cents. Union leaders will seek a provision for later adjustments to cover higher living costs, or to average off differentials between unions. In effect, it will be a new style Little Steel formula, but not designated as such.

Element of trouble is that union leaders do not intend to agree not to strike for wages that are higher than the level of the formula, or to relinquish provisions in existing wage contracts which call for automatic increases for higher production or advances in living costs. With denial of these exceptions the unions will withhold a no-strike pledge.

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COAL AND ECA: If the British get their way, the ECA will be engaged in the interesting task of literally carrying coals to Newcastle. On November 20, the British Government officially announced that it would soon start buying foreign coal to avert a threatened shortage in the United Kingdom, and that buyers would shop in the U.S. Despite Marshall Plan aid to Britain's nationalized coal industry, spent on attempts to modernize the mines, stocks are running short: miners are leaving the pits to take jobs in other industries and consumption of coal in England has been rising.

Now, it is reported from sources in the American coal industry that British buyers are here and are meeting with prices which would run about 40 per cent over British production costs, payable in dollars. Naturally, the British would like to conserve their present dollar balance. Hence their agents are throwing out feelers to see if ECA will foot the bill. So far as we know, the Marshall Plan organization has neither accepted nor rejected the suggestion. But, in view of Congressional desires to cut ECA funds, it would be surprising if such an American underwriting of one of the failures of British Socialism would be approved on the Hill. After all, many members of Congress can remember that Britain, under capitalism, not only did not have to import coal, but enjoyed one of its biggest sources of revenue from the export and sale of coal. They may also wonder when the British Government will seek further ECA funds to shore up other nationalized industries.

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SPEAKING OF 1952: Taft's victory in the election has not discouraged those who are pushing Eisenhower for the GOP nomination. There are voices of warning to Republicans who persist in backing the General. One of these found expression in an editorial in the Chicago Tribune (November 21), based on a letter from an unnamed person. Some might dismiss the letter as merely expressing the Tribune's well-known opposition to Eisenhower. But we have heard several observers in Washington (who have often called the turn in national politics) say much the same thing as the Tribune's unnamed source. (The latter, it is rumored, is a prominent professor of politics in a large university.)

He says: "I have always thought that Eisenhower is attached to the Roosevelt-Truman-Marshall group. I don't see how he could get the Republican nomination, unless by a sudden coup at the convention. Taft, Duff, and Warren will control so many delegates in advance that I don't see how Eisenhower can line up anything like

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a majority in the months before the convention meets. As he is now the best hope of the internationalists, I think that he will be held in reserve for the Democratic nomination.

"The internationalists obviously control the party machinery, and they could hand him the nomination on a platter, without his making a move in advance. He could then appeal to the country on a semi-nonpartisan basis, with the object of corraling a number of Republican votes". Then, discussing the possibility that Eisenhower may be European Commander, he goes on, "Eisenhower can be pictured in 1952 as the man who organized the defenses of Europe, held back the Red tide and saved civilization. In the meantime I expect the Democrats to attempt to unload on their opponents the responsibility for the three things that people are most irked about -- i.e., high prices, high taxes, and the war in the Orient."

Finally, the letter-writer foresees Truman demanding super-excess profits taxes, blaming the GOP for failing to soak the rich; demanding stiff controls, blaming the GOP for opposing them, etc.; blaming the GOP for getting us involved up to our necks in the Far Eastern war, etc. "If such a stratagem should succeed," he says, "then Eisenhower would not be identified with the unpopular war. He could be presented as the man who kept us out of war in Europe."

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CLEAVAGE IN GERMANY: One important element in the German controversy over rearmament has never been even mentioned in our press, nor in dispatches from Europe. This factor has been enveloped in hush-hush for a well-intentioned motive -- to conceal the fires of religious bigotry in the hope they will die down. Nevertheless, our report-writing officials in Germany have full knowledge of it. Already talk about the matter in Washington is growing. So, it won't be long before it forces its way into public print.

The untold story is the conflict of Catholic-Protestant opinion -- or rather, prejudice in Western Germany, and the unfortunate crystallization of the ancient grudge, dating from the Reformation, around the rearmament controversy.

First fact to grasp in this situation is that the estimated majority of inhabitants of West Germany are Catholics and the head of the Government, Chancellor Adenauer, is a Catholic. That would not be so, if Germany had its old boundaries of 1937. For the heavily Protestant area in the East (now under Russia) would reverse the present Catholic preponderance.

As it is now, the Catholic Adenauer stands out in front, the target of oratorical barbs from the Socialist (non-confessional) Schumacher and the Protestant nationalist, Pastor Niemoeller. U.S. observers just back from Germany describe the consequences as follows:

(1) The Protestant leaders believe that Adenauer's real, unspoken objective is to preserve a Catholic Germany; that he can't help but be influenced by the fear of reunification, with one possible result the rise of Protestant Prussia as the dominating province; that anyway he would prefer to play ball with Catholic France.

(2) On the other hand, Catholic leaders believe that Protestant leaders want to re-unite Germany (including the Soviet zone) simply to revive the old Protestant hegemony, even if it requires playing ball with Soviet Russia.

Now, U.S. official observers think there is no validity in these suspicions. It is hard to see how Adenauer, who has been criticized for being too strong an advocate of rearmament, places his political future ahead of the return of lost territory. Niemoeller is hardly a recognized political leader. Many of his flock seem to be following Schumacher, the Socialist, who is just as strong for rearmament as Adenauer, but wants to win better terms for Germany from the Allies. Nevertheless, U.S. observers do not minimize the political effect of these beliefs, however false. True or not, they are held by many Germans, and affected the recent elections.

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Book Events

A GENERATION ON TRIAL: U.S.A. versus Alger Hiss, by Alistair Cooke. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50. Reviewed by Freda Utley.

Like the curate's egg this book is good in parts. The author is a first-rate journalist with a keen sense for drama, and his narrative of the Hiss trial is as full of suspense and human interest as a top-notch detective story. His account of the proceedings, his characterization of the lawyers and witnesses on both sides, and his reproduction of the atmosphere in the court, are perhaps even better than that given in Seeds of Treason. But, when he allows his sympathy for the defendant and Communist sympathizers, or his hatred for anti-Communists, to get the upper hand, we are treated to a display of ex-parte judgments, prejudiced generalizations, and biased comments which obscure the issues and destroy the value of the book.

The author of A Generation on Trial is an American correspondent of the Manchester Guardian, which has a reputation for fairness and liberalism. But this particular correspondent seems to identify "progress" with some degree of leniency toward Communists. Mr. Cooke admits that he set out to cover the trial believing that Hiss had been smeared by "reactionaries". He is, however, too intelligent and honest not to have been convinced by the evidence presented of Hiss' guilt.

While not questioning the justice of the jury's verdict, he continues to revile those who exposed the culprit. His book is replete with unjustified comparisons and comments calculated to arouse sympathy for the accused and contempt for those who produced the evidence of his guilt. For instance, he not only makes the unwarranted assertion that the House Committee on Un-American Activities displayed a "dogged indifference" to Fascism. He also condemns what he calls its "egregious" insistence on continuing the investigation of the Communist conspiracy while the Soviet Union was "our fighting ally". While Hiss is pictured as a latter-day saint, the Congressional Committee is represented as thirsting for the sacrifice of a "full-blooded New Dealer" in order to "nail the curse of Communism on the coffin of the New Deal". The reader is left with the impression that any attempt to expose the Communist conspiracy is tantamount to support of all the forces of evil.

According to Mr. Cooke's view of recent history no decent person foresaw the menace which has been created by the Administration's war-time and post-war friendship for Soviet Russia. He thinks that it is "partisan lunacy" to say that anyone blundered, or was guilty of treason, in our loss of the peace. One is reminded of what Tom Paine said of Edmund Burke. Speaking of Burke's sympathy for the French aristocrats guillotined during the Terror and his indifference to the sufferings of the French people under the Bourbon monarchy, Paine said that he "pitied the plummage and forgot the dying bird". Mr. Cooke's heart bleeds for Hiss and those of his generation who sympathized with the Communists and condoned Stalin's bloody tyranny, but he shows no compassion for the millions of "common men" delivered by Hiss and others like him to suffer Communist oppression.

He reserves his hatred for the "reactionaries" and in particular for the ex-Communists who have tried to atone for their past services to the tyrants (whom they had been deluded into regarding as the saviors of mankind), by endeavouring, at great cost to themselves, to awaken the American people to the reality of the Communist menace. According to Mr. Cooke all such characters are "a solemn breed of renegades"; a "nauseating crew of relapsed heretics". Hiss, on the other hand, is a noble soul who had the misfortune to be born at the wrong time.

It is hardly surprising that A Generation on Trial has been so warmly praised by the so-called liberals who still enjoy a quasi-monopoly in the book reviewing field. No other book more clearly reveals the danger which the "anti-anti-Communists" constitute to our security.

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